UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

University of Toronto Choral Studies Concert

MacMillan Singers, Soprano-Alto Chorus, Tenor-Bass Chorus, Chamber Choir

Kathleen Allan, Jayden Browne, Thomas Burton, Alba (Yuan) Chen, Maria Conkey, Jamie Hillman, Tyrese Walters, Melanie Yirenkyi, *conductors*

Sunday, December 1, 2024 at 2:30 pm | Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Road, Toronto

Choral Studies concerts are made possible in part by the Elmer Iseler Endowment.

Texts and Translations

Canticum Novum

Cantate Domino canticum novum:
Cantate Domino omnis terra.
Cantate Domino,
Et benedicite nomini ejus:
Annuntiate de die in diem salutare ejus.
Sing to the Lord a new song:

Sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord,
Bless his name:
Show forth his salvation from day to day.

Qilak

Qilak (the sky, the heavens, paradise)
tunguniq (reflection of open water in the sky at the horizon)

A La Nanita Nana

A la nanita nana, nanita ella.
Mi niño tiene sueño bendito sea.
Fuentecita que corre clara y sonora.
Ruiseñor que en la selva cantando llora.
Callad mientras la cuna, se balancea.

Come, let’s sing a little lullaby.
My child is sleepy, blessed be.
A little fountain running clear and loud.
A nightingale that sings and weeps in the forest.
Hush, while the cradle rocks.

Dona Nobis Pacem
Dona nobis pacem (Grant us peace)

Hodie Christus Natus Est

Hodie Christus natus est.	Today Christ is born;
Hodie salvator apparuit.	today the savior has appeared;
Hodie in terra canunt angeli, letantur archangeli.	today the angels sing on earth, the archangels rejoice;
Hodie exultant justi, dicentes gloria in excelsis deo.	today good people exult, saying, "Glory to God in the highest."
Alleluya	Alleluia

Convidando Esta la Noche

Convidando está la noche	The night is an invitation
Aquí de músicas varias,	Here for various bands,
Al recién nacido infante	To the new-born baby
Canten tiernas alabanzas	Let us sing tender songs of praise.
¡Ay, que me abraso, ay! Divino dueño, ¡ay!	Ah, how I burn, divine Master!
En la hermosura, ¡ay! De tus ojuelos, ¡ay!	In the beauty of your little eyes!
¡Ay, cómo llueven, ay!	Ah, how a hundred bright stars pour down
Ciento luceros, ¡ay!	Rays of glory, Rays of fire!
En la hermosura, ¡ay! De tus ojuelos, ¡ay!	
¡Ay, cómo llueven, ay! Ciento luceros, ¡ay!	
Rayos de gloria, ¡ay! Rayos de fuego, ¡	

Biographies

Kathleen Allan
Kathleen Allan is the Artistic and Executive Director of the Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto and a member of the music faculty at the University of Toronto. In high demand as a guest conductor, commissioned composer, and clinician, she is equally comfortable working in early, contemporary, and symphonic repertoire.

Since the beginning of her tenure with the Amadeus Choir in 2019, the Choir has commissioned over a dozen new works, founded the Choral Creation Lab for emerging

composers and poets, and formed new partnerships with diverse artists and ensembles throughout the GTA and beyond. From 2016-2023, she served as the Artistic Director of Canzona, Winnipeg's professional Baroque choir, with whom she conducted many of the masterworks of the Baroque era. A devoted interpreter of early music and steeped in the practice of historically-informed performance, she is passionate about finding relevant contemporary context for the works of the past and sharing their universal power with broad audiences. Recent guest conducting engagements include the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Victoria Symphony, Regina Symphony Orchestra, Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, and Early Music Vancouver. In 2015, Ms. Allan made her Asian debut conducting Handel's Messiah and Bach's Christmas Oratorio in Japan, and in 2016, she was the recipient of the Sir Ernest MacMillan Prize in Choral Conducting.

Her compositions have been commissioned, performed and recorded by ensembles throughout the Americas and Europe and have been featured at two World Symposiums on Choral Music. Her music is published by Boosey and Hawkes, Oxford University Press, and Cypress Choral Music, and she is a MusicSpoke composer. Inspired by her Celtic roots and musical upbringing in Newfoundland and Labrador, her compositions often fuse contemporary rhythms and harmonies with undertones of ancient folk music. Also an accomplished soprano, she has appeared as a soloist with the National Broadcast Orchestra, Berkshire Choral Festival, and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. In addition to freelancing regularly in Canada and the US, she has performed as a member of the Vancouver Chamber Choir, the Arnold Schoenberg Chor (Vienna), Skylark Vocal Ensemble (Atlanta), Clarion Choir (New York), and the Yale Schola Cantorum (New Haven).

As a passionate educator, she has served as Visiting Professor of Conducting at Western University (2019-2021) and now conducts the Chamber Choir at the University of Toronto. She holds a degree in composition from the University of British Columbia and a master's degree in conducting from Yale University.

Jayden Browne

Jayden Browne is very excited to be in his final year of his masters in choral conducting at U of T. After graduating from St. Olaf College in 2023 with his degree in music and theatre, Jayden moved to Toronto to further his study of conducting in a big city. Since moving here last year, Jayden has found success in Toronto as a teacher, a singer, and a conductor. He currently sings and conducts with That Choir and That Community Choir, he directs the Toronto Festival Singers and the Massey College Choir, and is the associate conductor of the Orpheus Choir. He wants to specifically thank Dr. Hillman,

Dr. Dolloff, and Thomas Burton for the conducting opportunities they've given him and the valuable wisdom they have all shared.

Thomas Burton
Raised in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Thomas Burton is Artistic Director of the Orpheus Choir of Toronto, Conductor of the University of Toronto Tenor-Bass Chorus, and Artistic Director of Durham Region's RESOUND Choir. He is co-conductor of the award winning Halifax based chamber choir, Eastern Horizon. Praised for his innovative and eclectic programming as well as his dynamic presence on the podium, Thomas is in-demand nationally as a guest conductor, clinician and educator.

Thomas is passionate about inspiring excellence in performers of all ages and abilities. He has had the privilege of working with such ensembles as the Pacific Chorale, The Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto, Pro Coro Canada, the National Youth Choir of Canada, and the Vancouver Chamber Choir. An accomplished choral singer, Thomas has sung with some of Canada's finest choral ensembles including the Toronto Mendelssohn Singers, Voces Boreales, and the Nathaniel Dett Chorale.

Thomas is a recipient of multiple awards, including the Ken Fleet Choral Conducting Scholarship and the Sir Ernest MacMillan Memorial Foundation Award. In 2024 he was selected by Jeunesses Musicales as the inaugural recipient of the Iwan Edwards Scholarship for Young Conductors. He holds a bachelor's degree in Trombone Performance from McGill University and a master's degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Michigan where he studied with Dr. Jerry Blackstone and Dr. Eugene Rogers.

Yuan (Alba) Chen
Yuan Chen holds a Bachelor of Music Education from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and a master's degree in Choral Conducting from Memorial University. She is currently in her first year of the Doctor of Musical Arts program at the University of Toronto.
Previously, Yuan served as the Musical Director at Nomad Stages in Stephenville, Newfoundland, where she led her choir to win the Best Choir award at the Stephenville Rotary Music Festival. This summer, she also took on the role of Music Director for the 46th Stephenville Theatre Festival, further showcasing her exceptional leadership and communication skills. Additionally, she is a guest conductor for The Atlantic Boy Choir.

With over a decade of experience conducting choirs of all ages—from children to university students and seniors—Yuan has garnered significant accolades. She led the Chorus of the Department of History at Fudan University to a Silver Award in the Annual Chorus Competition and directed the Chorus of East China University of Political

Science and Law to a Third Prize, both starting from scratch with no prior music background.

In addition to her choral achievements, Yuan has a rich background in the performing arts as an improvisation actress, film producer, and director for five years.

Maria Conkey
A native of Newfoundland and Labrador, Maria Conkey (she/her), is an inspiring and innovative conductor, clinician, and pedagogue. She is passionate about using choral music to build community and nurture leadership skills in young people. In addition to beginning her Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) at the University of Toronto, she is the Artistic Director of the Oakville Choir for Children & Youth and the Outreach Coordinator at St. Michael's Choir School.

Maria is also the 2024-25 recipient of the Elmer Iseler National Graduate Fellowship in Choral Conducting, and a nominee for the 2023 Leslie Bell Prize for Choral Conducting. She has also received the Beryl Barnes Memorial Graduate Award and the Andreas Barban Memorial Scholarship.

Past engagements include the Junior Choir Conductor at St. Michael's Choir School (ON) - on leave while studying, the Artistic Director of Young Voices Toronto, the Conductor of the award-winning senior choirs at St. Bonaventure's College (NL), and the Choral Director at the Basilica of St. John the Baptist (NL). She has also worked with Shallaway - Newfoundland Youth in Chorus and several children's, youth, and adult choirs, including the Alberta Youth Choir and the University of Alberta Madrigal Singers.

Narek Ebrahimi
Narek Abrahamian is a pianist and piano instructor with a rich background in both performance and teaching. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Piano Performance at the University of Toronto, after earning his Bachelor's degree from the Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan, Armenia, where he graduated with honors.

Narek has received several prizes and awards, including first prize at the "Youth National Music Competition" and the "Alice & Armen Matheson" Entrance Scholarship from the University of Toronto. His performance highlights include concerts and recitals both as a soloist and collaborator at major venues in Tehran, Yerevan, and Toronto. He has also served as the pianist for the St. Sargis Church choir in Tehran for five years. As a recording artist, Narek has been involved in recording works by contemporary composers as both a soloist and accompanist.

Lori Gemmell
Lori Gemmell started as a street-corner busker in Montreal and wound up as the Principal Harpist with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony in 2000. She also plays regularly with the Toronto Symphony, The National Ballet of Canada Orchestra and the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra.

Lori has toured Europe and Japan with the Nouvelle Ensemble Moderne, teaches at Wilfrid Laurier University and was gifted by the late composer R. Murray Schafer, with a set of four songs for harp and voice. She is a member of the Four Seasons Harp Quartette. Her most recent recording is Canadian Music for Harp. She has also recorded as a soloist on Prelude, with Jennifer Swartz on their harp duo recording *The Garden of Peacocks*, with trumpeter Larry Larson on Divertissement and with songwriters Kevin Fox and Feist. With her husband Tom Allen, Lori has been touring Canada with their new chamber musical *J.S. Bach's Long Walk in the Snow*.

Dr. Jamie Hillman
Jamie Hillman is a Canadian and American musician, active as a conductor, music educator, singer, pianist, and composer-arranger. He holds the endowed Elmer Iseler Chair in Conducting at the University of Toronto where he is Director of Choral Studies and an Associate Professor. He conducts the U of T MacMillan Singers and leads the master's and doctoral degree programs in Choral Conducting. Professor Hillman is also cross listed as a faculty member in Emmanuel College's Master of Sacred Music program. In 2024, Dr. Hillman received the Faculty of Music's Teaching Award which recognizes excellence, commitment, and innovation in teaching.

Professor Hillman has served on the faculties of Boston University Metropolitan College/Prison Education Program, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, Kodály Music Institute, Longy School of Music of Bard College, and Tyndale University. As a Boston University Prison Arts Scholar, he co-initiated an innovative vocal music program in the Massachusetts prison system.

Dr. Hillman is an examiner for Conservatory Canada and has adjudicated, guest conducted, performed, and presented throughout Canada and the United States, and in Brazil, France, India, Indonesia, Portugal, and Taiwan. He has led All-State, festival, or honour choirs in Alberta, Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Rhode Island, Taiwan, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia. Most recently he conducted two national festival choruses at Carnegie Hall with Manhattan Concert Productions and National Concerts. He returns to Carnegie Hall in 2025. Hillman has conducted world premieres by Shireen Abu-Khader, Matthew Emery, Sarah Quartel, and Marie-Claire Saindon, among others.

Dr. Hillman's schedule of upcoming engagements includes conducting All-State/festival/honour choirs in Louisiana, New York, North Dakota, and Virginia; serving on the international juries of the 14th World Choir Festival on Musical and Competition (Thessaloniki, Greece), 2nd Thailand International Choral Festival (Bangkok), and Bali International Choir Festival (Indonesia); and residencies at several Canadian and international universities.

Professor Hillman is the curator and editor of The Jamie Hillman Choral Series published by Santa Barbara Music Publishing. He also edits Beckenhorst Press' Concert Series and writes choral pedagogical curriculum with composer Dan Forrest. He has published articles on choral literature and pedagogy in several academic journals.

Dr. Hillman earned an associate diploma (ARCT) from the Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto) and a Bachelor of Music from Western University (London, Canada). In 2024, he was inducted to Western's Don Wright Faculty of Music's Alumni Wall of Fame. He completed the Master of Music at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the Doctor of Musical Arts at Boston University, where he studied with Ann Howard Jones. He is the 2012 laureate of the Leslie Bell Prize for Choral Conducting from the Ontario Arts Council.

Dr. Joy Lee

Dr. Joy Lee is an accomplished Canadian pianist with a vibrant and multifaceted career as a collaborative pianist, teacher, vocal coach, soloist, and adjudicator. Driven by her deep passion for music and education, Dr. Lee has performed at prestigious events and venues, including the Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C. during President Barack Obama's inauguration celebration, the Banff Centre for the Arts, and locations across Canada's Northwest Territories, such as Inuvik and Yellowknife.

Dr. Lee holds a Bachelor of Music and Master of Music in solo piano from the University of Toronto. Her love for vocal repertoire led her to pursue a second Master of Music in Collaborative Piano Studies at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Toronto.

As a Lecturer of Music and Worship Arts at Tyndale University, Dr. Lee is dedicated to inspiring and mentoring the next generation of musicians. She is also in high demand as an adjudicator, having adjudicated performances at competitions such as the Arcadia Academy of Music, OMFA Provincial Finals, Sudbury Music Festival, and the Toronto

Kiwanis Festival. In 2025, she will join the panels for the Peel Music Festival and the ORMTA Eastern Zone competition.

Dr. Lee's musical achievements have been recognized with numerous accolades, including second prize at the 2017 Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition and the 2018 Gwendolyn Williams Koldofsky Prize for excellence in collaboration. In April 2023, she made her Carnegie Hall debut as part of the Canada at Carnegie concert series. Later that year, in November, she and soprano Stéphanie McKay-Turgeon performed the works of French composer Henri Dutilleux at Maison Dutilleux-Joy in Candes-Saint-Martin, France.

A passionate collaborator, Dr. Lee was honored to serve as a faculty member at the University of Toronto Choral Conducting Symposium in 2022 and 2023. She currently works with the Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto, MacMillan Singers at the University of Toronto, and Tyndale Community Choir. In addition, she serves on the Board of Directors for the North Toronto Songbirds, exemplifying her dedication to fostering community connections and celebrating the arts.

Rebeca Lluveras Matos

Born in Cuba and a naturalized Mexican citizen, Rebeca began studying the piano at the age of eight. Since her early age she received numerous awards in piano competitions in her home country of Cuba.

Ms. Lluveras completed her Bachelor of Music at the prestigious Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA) in Havana in 2005. A year later she was invited to Austria to study with maestro Harald Ossberger where she was selected for further study with the members of prestigious faculty at the University of Vienna. In 2008, she earned with honors her Master's in Piano Methodology in Havana under the leading Cuban teacher Teresita Junco. In 2021 she earned another degree in Piano Technique and Biomechanics at the Higher School of High Performance Music (ESMAR-SPAIN). During her years in Cuba, she performed as a soloist with the Cuban Symphony Orchestra, as well as in contemporary Music Festivals. She also taught at the Instituto Superior de Arte for five years.

In 2012 Ms. Lluveras moved to Mexico. Currently she is on the faculty at the University of the Arts of Yucatán. She has performed in the Manuel M. Ponce Hall of the Palace of Fine Arts, Blas Galindo Auditorium of the National Center of the Arts, Sala Netzahualcóyotl of the University Cultural Center of the UNAM, Centro Cultural Helénico, Teatro Degollado (Guadalajara), Sala Felipe Villanueva, (State of Mexico) José Peón Contreras Theater (Mérida, Yucatán) among others. She has also performed as a soloist with the Symphony Orchestra of the National Polytechnic Institute. She has served as a juror of the National Piano Competition at the University of Guadalajara, as well as in the internal piano competitions at the Faculty of Music of UNAM and the Escuela Superior de Música de Bellas Artes, in Mexico City.

Tyrese Walters

Tyrese Walters is a graduate of Western University with a Bachelor of Music with Honours in Voice Performance, where he studied Voice with Prof. Torin Chiles and Conducting with Prof. Kathleen Allan and Dr. Mark Ramsay. In his final year at Western, he co-led and co-conducted the Student Choral Initiative, a 20-member choir, within the Faculty of Music. He is the recipient of many awards and scholarships, including the Richard G. Manuel Music Award (2022), and the Deral Johnson Award (2022). Tyrese is continuing his studies at the University of Toronto where he will complete a Master of Music in Choral Conducting under the direction of Dr. Jamie Hillman.

Tyrese is an experienced choral singer and conductor. He is the conductor of the low-voice ensemble, “Rocambolesco,” and an associate conductor of the 60-voice youth choir “Frisson” in the MSC Choirs organization. He is the Assistant Conductor of “Encore” in the Young Voices Toronto organization. Currently, he sings in the Nathaniel Dett Chorale and Concreamus Chamber Singers.

Melanie Yirenkyi

Melanie Yirenkyi is a music educator, conductor and singer based in Toronto. Her passion for music inspired her to make the switch from biomedical sciences to music during her undergraduate studies. Melanie went on to obtain a BFA in music from York University, and later, a B.Ed from Queen’s University’s Artist in Community Education program.

Melanie is dedicated to refining her skills as a conductor and has engaged in numerous choral workshops and masterclasses, working with various choirs such as the Vancouver Chamber Choir, and learning from esteemed conductors Eugene Rogers, Jennifer Tham, Kari Turunen, and Ragnar Rasmussen.

Melanie is presently the interim music director at Jarvis St. Baptist Church, where she has been involved in the Music Ministry as both a pianist and vocalist for over ten years. Melanie is delighted to be studying under Dr. Jamie Hillman in the Master of Music in Choral Conducting program.